(c) if so, the incentives given by MPED A to encourage Indian exporters to follow this policy ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) MPEDA conducted a market study in USA through M/s. H. M. Johnson and Associates, one of the leading marketing consultants. The study has recommended a marketing approach to overcome the negati *vc* perceptions and to develop image among buyers.

(c) In order to increase the exports of marine products. Government have been taking several steps, which include schemes for extending financial assistance to the seafood processing industry; steps to upgrade processing facilities to meet international standards of hygiene and quality; expansion of aquaculture; imparting training to aquaculture farmers to adopt sound management practices to prevent outbreak of diseases; assistance to produce value-added products for export; participation by MPEDA in international fairs, conducting overseas market surveys; etc.

Growth Centres at Gandhidham, Palanpur and Vagra in Gujarat

3113. SHRI AHMED PATEL : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether all the three Growth Centres at Gandhidham, Palanpur and Vagra have become functional in the State of Gujarat;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of plots allotted at each of the Centres, so far; and

(d) which industries are generally being set up ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYA SAGARRAO): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir,

Vagra : An effluent treatment plant is being commissioned here shortly. No plot has been allotted here so far. Chemical units are expected to come up here.

Gandhidham : There are 115 plots under offer/allotment stage. Light Engineering Manufacturing Units and household furniture units are expected to come up here.

Palanpur : Here the plots have been demarcated, although no plot has been allotted so far. Light Engineering Manufacturing Units and household furniture units are expected to come up at this Growth Centre.

Target of export for current year

3114. SHRIMATI N. P. DURGA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the exports of the Country have registered an upward trend in current year;

0?) if so, the figures of export for first nine months of the current financial year as compared to the corresponding period of last year;

(c) the target for the current financial year; and

(d) other details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The value of India's exports of merchandise goods was US$ 38.11 billion in the first nine months of the current financial year registering a growth of 20.36% as compared to the corresponding period in the previous year.

(c) A target of 12% has been fixed for export of merchandise goods for 2002-03.

(d) The growth rate of exports witnessed is far above the target of 12% for the current financial year. During the current financial year export performance has been quite satisfactory, though the World Economic and Trade Outlook has not been encouraging. This is evident from the export value of US$ 46.07 billion achieved during the period April to February, 2002-03 registering a growth rate of 16.76% over corresponding period of previous year.

Export of flowers

3115. SHRI M. V RAJASEKHARAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Southern District of Karnataka are growing good export quality flowers;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to start flower auction centre to facilitate flower export to international destinations; and